

Dec. 16, 1944

Darling,

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Yesterday was fun. I took a little trip up front to see how things were going and made a few contacts which may be of some value. I have an itch to get up in the blue and get a stick in my hand again. The front is rugged these cold days, and men are living in hovels all over Europe this winter. Can you tell me why human beings constantly subject themselves to the indignity of warfare? Even if you leave out the other considerations of human values, the death, pain, torture, starvation, destruction, cruelty, why should people choose to live like the beasts of the forest, or the pigs of the sty?

It is encouraging to hear you state that people are beginning to get more and more internationally minded. It is imperative that we realize, first, that isolationist nationalism is a decadent, dangerous, and defeated attitude; and second, (this being so) the duty and obligation of the United States to a world unity is that of leadership in the ideals of democracy, the validity of the concept behind the obvious falsity of the statement "All men are created equal"- (which I take to mean, the individual human values of all mankind are equal). Henry Luce has beautifully and clearly stated this proposition; better I think than any other I've read. After this war, we will again commit the human crime of being an ostrich; we will bury our heads in the sands of "minding our own business." This is easier, the way of least resistance. But I think this: the day we observe and condone any government, any where in the world, subjugating the "rights" or freedoms of their own, or other, peoples, then, at that moment, we have lost the first battle of World War #3! Thus, we can reconstruct our defeats in the 30's: Mukden, then all Manchuria and China; the Jew-baiting in Germany; Ethiopia; Spain; and finally Czechoslovakia, the infamy of Munich. These defeats were ours, but we didn't pay until later. Billions of dollars, millions of lives, will be the price this time; maybe next time it will be even our sovereignty as a people.

One characteristic of the American army, (and the American people) is a failure to be able to evaluate other people apart from comparison of outward forms with our own outward forms, and divorced from an evaluation of intrinsic merits. Thus, the basic feeling, I think, of most G.I.'s is a distrust of the English, a sense of the foreign-ness of the Belgians, Russians, Dutch. Esstestrasse, L'avenue Premier, King's Street, is not like Main Street and is hence suspiciously to be regarded, and distrusted. I think many have made the acquaintance, but only a few have really met the guy who lives there. We are cursed, perhaps, by being the most homesick army or people in the world. When the need for bullets is over, a tangible something we understand though don't like, we'll all try and get home as soon as possible, to bury our heads, and forget, as quickly as possible. Thus, we will have defeated an army and lost a war. This

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we must avoid at all costs. The costs now, are nothing to what they will be later on!

But such speculations lead to little, at the moment, except a sense of defeat and futility. The human beast is a Janus. I feel sure that the vast majority of the world are men of good will. But their values, the little, important ones of humanity, are inarticulate. The rest lead because the goals of self, or national interest, of power, of ambition, of aggrandizement are very articulate, lend themselves readily to slogans, to drums, to "pride" and "honor"; so everybody plays, but only a few individuals ever win. The rest, we little men of the world, merely pay!

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To become practical, the situation in Greece today is the Number One problem in the world. It is possible to see in the petty struggles of a distraught people, the beginnings of a struggle of power politics, and the seeds of deep and abiding distrust, between two of our allies. Did Joe Smith come here to die, that the Mediterranean might become a mare Anglicum, or the Balkans a sphere of Sovietism? Thus do the aims of a war get confused with the forms of the ambitious minority. It's enough to make one escape into bitter cynicism.

But, just to show you how utterly unreasonable people are, I am sending the receipts for four War bonds I recently bought for the kids, an investment in a dubious future. If we can't tie into what America stands for, what is there to bet on these days?

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I love you, Fletchie -

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